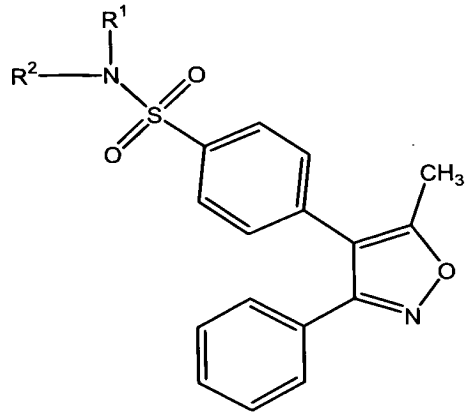
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A pharmaceutical composition for application to an area of skin of a subject for local and/or systemic treatment of a COX-2 mediated disorder, the composition comprising a backing sheet that is flexibly conformable to the area of skin, said backing sheet having opposing surfaces that are respectively distal and proximal to the skin when applied; and a coating on the proximal surface of the backing sheet, said coating comprising (a) an adhesive and (b) an active agent comprising valdecoxib or a prodrug thereof or a salt thereof, the active agent being in a therapeutically effective total amount and dispersed in a matrix that comprises zero to less than an active agent solubilizing effective amount in total of one or more solvents other than the adhesive.

2. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the active agent comprises a compound having the formula



where R^1 and R^2 are independently hydrogen or a group that is metabolically replaceable by hydrogen; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of such a compound.

3. The composition of Claim 2 wherein, in the formula for said compound, R^1 is hydrogen or a lower alkyl, hydroxyalkyl or acyl group and R^2 is hydrogen or a lower alkyl, hydroxyalkyl or acyl group or a group R^3–CO– where R^3 is hydrogen or a lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, lower carboxyalkyl, lower alkoxyalkyl, lower alkoxycarbonylalkyl, lower aminoalkyl, lower alkylcarbonylaminoalkyl, lower alkoxycarbonylaminoalkyl, phenyl or lower alkoxycarbonyl group.

4. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the active agent comprises valdecoxib.

5. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the active agent comprises parecoxib or a

pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

6. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the active agent comprises parecoxib sodium.

7. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the coating comprises a layer having the active agent dispersed in a matrix that comprises the adhesive.

8. The composition of Claim 7 wherein the active agent is dispersed at least partly in solid particulate form in the matrix.

9. The composition of Claim 7 wherein the active agent is at least partly molecularly dispersed in the matrix.

10. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the coating comprises a reservoir layer that comprises the active agent adjacent to the backing sheet, and an adhesive layer that is proximal to the skin when applied.

11. The composition of Claim 10, further comprising a membrane between the reservoir layer and the adhesive layer, said membrane permitting passage of the active agent.

12. The composition of Claim 1 wherein the coating further comprises at least one skin permeation enhancer.

13. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of terpenes, terpenoids, fatty alcohols and derivatives thereof.

14. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of oleyl alcohol, thymol, menthol, carvone, carveol, citral, dihydrocarveol, dihydrocarvone, neomenthol, isopulegol, 4-terpinenol, menthone, pulegol, camphor, geraniol, α-terpineol, linalool, carvacrol, *trans*-anethole, isomers thereof and racemic mixtures thereof.

15. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of fatty acids and alkyl and glyceryl esters thereof.

16. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of isopropyl laurate, isopropyl myristate, methyl oleate, glyceryl monolaurate, glyceryl monooleate, glyceryl monostearate, glyceryl dilaurate and glyceryl dioleate.

17. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is glyceryl monolaurate.

18. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from fatty acid esters of glycolic acid and its salts.

19. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from lactate esters of fatty alcohols.

20. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the at least one skin permeation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of laurocapram and derivatives thereof, dimethylsulfoxide, n-decyl methylsulfoxide, salicylic acid and alkyl esters thereof, N,N-dimethylacetamide, dimethylformamide, N,N-dimethyltoluamide, 2-pyrrolidinone and N-alkyl derivatives thereof, 2-nonyl-1,3-dioxolane, eucalyptol and sorbitan esters.

21. The composition of Claim 12 wherein the coating comprises about 1% to about 10% by weight of an active agent selected from the group consisting of valdecoxib, parecoxib and parecoxib sodium, about 2% to about 20% by weight in total of one or more skin permeation enhancers, and about 70% to about 97% by weight of an adhesive composition.

22. The composition of Claim 1 that further comprises a peelable release liner that, prior to use, is adjacent to the layer that contains the adhesive.

23. A method of local treatment of pain and/or inflammation at a site thereof in a subject, the method comprising a step of applying a pharmaceutical composition to a skin surface of the subject, said composition comprising a backing sheet that is flexibly conformable to the area of skin, said backing sheet having opposing surfaces that are respectively distal and proximal to the skin when applied, and a coating on the proximal surface of the backing sheet, said coating comprising (a) an adhesive and (b) an active agent comprising valdecoxib or a prodrug thereof or a salt thereof, the active agent being in a therapeutically effective total amount and dispersed in a matrix that comprises zero to less than an active agent solubilizing effective amount in total of one or more solvents other than the adhesive; and a step of leaving the composition in place for a time period effective to permit delivery of a locally therapeutic amount of the active agent.

24. The method of Claim 23 wherein the skin surface to which the composition is applied is at a locus overlying or adjacent to the site of pain and/or inflammation.

25. A method of systemic treatment of a subject having a COX-2 mediated disorder, the method comprising a step of applying a pharmaceutical composition to a skin surface of the subject, said composition comprising a backing sheet that is flexibly conformable to the area of skin, said backing sheet having opposing surfaces that are respectively distal and proximal to the skin when applied, and a coating on the proximal surface of the backing sheet, said coating comprising (a) an adhesive and (b) an active agent comprising valdecoxib or a prodrug thereof or a salt thereof, the active agent being in a therapeutically effective total amount and dispersed in a matrix that comprises zero to less than an active agent solubilizing effective amount in total of one or more solvents other than the adhesive; and a step of leaving the composition in place for a time period effective to permit transdermal delivery of a therapeutic amount of the active agent.